

## New Directions

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# Newsfile

Editorial Staff

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## NEWSFILE

**The university's celebration of its founding 118 years ago** was marked by the annual Charter Day Dinner on Feb. 28 and the Charter Day Convocation on March 1.

The gala Charter Day Dinner, held at the Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel, was the setting for the presentation of distinguished achievement awards to six of the university's outstanding alumni. A capacity crowd of 2,000 attended the \$150-a-plate affair.

Among the alumni who received achievement awards were: HOUSTON A. BAKER JR., professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania; RANDOLPH W. BROMERY, Commonwealth professor of geophysics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and president of Geoscience Engineering Corp; and CHARLES F. JOHNSON, a producer at Universal Studios in Burbank, Calif.

Also, FRANK P. LLOYD, an Indianapolis physician and president and chief executive officer of Methodist Hospital of Indiana in Indianapolis; ESTHER G. POLLARD, a noted community service volunteer in Washington, D.C., and a retired D.C. social work administrator; and LAWRENCE DOUGLAS WILDER, a Virginia state senator from Richmond and currently a candidate for the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor of Virginia.

The following morning the scene shifted to Cramton Auditorium for the traditional Charter Day Convocation featuring a main address delivered by Congressman LOUIS STOKES D-Ohio. Stokes received an honorary doctor of laws degree prior to his address.

**The university's endowment campaign** is richer by a quarter of a million dollars, thanks to a surprise gift from JOE L. ALLBRITTON, chairman of the board of the Riggs National Bank, and his wife BARBARA.

The \$250,000 gift was announced as the university was celebrating its annual Charter Day Dinner. Proceeds from the dinner also went toward the endowment campaign, which by the end of February was only \$650,000 shy of its \$2 million goal.

The endowment campaign, officially known as the Howard University New Direction Endowment Campaign, was launched late last year after the U.S. Congress appropriated \$2 million in matching funds.

The gift by the Allbrittons, when matched dollar-for-dollar, represents a half a million dollars in contributions to the university.

**A team of researchers** at the university has received a major grant of approximately \$2.5 million from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to undertake a five-year study on the causes of poor pregnancy outcomes among low-income women.

The study, to be conducted by researchers in the School of Human Ecology and the College of Medicine, will consist of four separate but related projects (nutritional, sociological, psychological and medical concerns) and will involve a predominantly Black group of 600 women between the ages of 18 and 35 who reside in the Washington metropolitan area.

According to CECILE H. EDWARDS, dean of the School of Human Ecology and the principal investigator of the study, the findings of the study will enhance efforts to improve the outcomes of pregnancy on the national level, particularly among low-income women.

For example, in 1982 the infant mortality rate in the District of Columbia was 20.3 per 1,000 live

births. Nationally, during the same year, the mortality rate for Black infants was 19.6 per 1,000 live births, compared to the overall national average of 11.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Dean Edwards notes that "because of the analyses which will be done during the course of pregnancy and the documentation of diet and food behaviors of the mothers, the results of the study should enhance the researchers' ability to predict poor pregnancy outcomes and to design measures to increase the likelihood that normal infants will be born."

**Distinguished members of the judiciary**, friends and relatives, among others, paid their last respects on February 27 to BELFORD V. LAWSON, JR., distinguished attorney, noted civil rights activist, humanitarian and civic leader. Funeral services were held at Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel on the main campus.

Lawson, who was born on July 9, 1901 in Roanoke, Virginia, died on February 23, 1985. He was a 1932 graduate of the university's law school. Throughout an illustrious legal career that spanned many decades, he inspired innumerable young lawyers by his own example of service to his people and his dedication to the legal profession. He headed a successful law firm (in Washington, D.C.) for 44 years until his retirement in 1977.

A passage from the program read: "His law firm was the launching site for many young attorneys, some of whom are now judges and outstanding members of the legal profession. Always eager to elevate the image of the Black attorney, his law firm, which included as a partner, his wife, a former Juvenile Court jurist, and a distinguished attorney in her own right, was the first Black firm to move downtown to the central business district, initially on "K" Street and then to Connecticut Avenue. Throughout his legendary career, during which he acquired a national reputation as a brilliant and skilled trial advocate,



Mr. Lawson was a relentless foe of racial and social injustice with a boundless passion for justice, dignity and equality for members of his race...."

He had shared his wisdom and advice with many who sought him out, serving as an advisor, counselor and confidant to prominent political personalities.

**"We think the Movement has already been successful** even if it were to stop yesterday," observed MARY FRANCES BERRY, one of the founders of the Free South Africa Movement at a January Newsmaker Breakfast held at the Blackburn Center.

Berry is a professor of history at Howard, a senior fellow of the university's Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, an outspoken member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights—and a long-time believer in the philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience.

Her arrest inside the South African Embassy on Nov. 21—along with that of District of Columbia Delegate Walter Fauntroy and Randall Robinson, executive director of TransAfrica—launched a nationwide protest drive against South Africa's racial policies that had resulted in the arrest of more than 1,800 people (including a host of celebrities) by the end of February.

"The Movement has already been successful because South Africa was on nobody's lips and nobody's minds until we did this [sat-in at the embassy]," she said. "South Africa is now in every newspaper and people talk about it wherever you go and some people who didn't know what apartheid was now know what it is and are concerned about it. So that in itself—the education of the public—is an important thing."

In addition to speaking of the origins and impact of the Free South Africa Movement, she discussed proposed legislation that will be introduced into Congress calling for imposing sanctions on South Africa, halting any new investment in the country and banning the sale of South Africa's gold coin, the

Kruggerand, in the United States.

"It is in the long-term strategic interest of the United States to be on the side of the Black majority in South Africa," she noted, in closing. "In the long run, time is running out in South Africa and the Black majority is ultimately going to come to power.... The idea is to be on the side of justice and freedom early rather than doing as the United States usually does—waiting until it's all over [Blacks have achieved power], and then coming back and saying, 'Why don't these people like us?'"

The Newsmaker Breakfasts were organized by the Department of University Relations to foster interaction between news sources at Howard and professionals in the news media. February's Newsmaker Breakfast featured Audrey Chapman, a much-quoted family therapist and counselor with the Office of Counseling and Career Development. Taking off from the question, "Is Ann Landers or Mike Royko Right?," she discussed the difficulties so many men and women have today in forging intimate relationships.

**"Breaking the Barriers," a symposium on voting rights**, was held at the Howard Law School on January 19 under the sponsorship of the Howard Law Journal. The symposium, which attracted students, academicians and practicing attorneys, was organized to provide a forum on actual and potential infringements on the voting rights of Blacks and other disadvantaged minorities.

Giving an overview of the situation, RICHARD ENGSTROM, a professor at the University of New Orleans, described the two phases the voting rights struggle has gone through: the attack against vote denial and the attack against vote dilution.

"Vote denial, the absolute denial of the right to vote, is largely—but not completely—a matter of history," he noted. "Vote dilution, which can be dated from the late '60s, refers to limiting the ability of Black people and other minorities to convert bal-

lots into the election of candidates of their choice." And this, he noted, is very much a reality. He cited at-large elections (as opposed to the adoption of a single member district system) and gerrymandering as the most prevalent techniques used to dilute minority voting strength.

Today's voting rights attorneys, whom he described as "a resilient bunch," have been utilizing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended in 1982, to challenge minority vote dilution through the courts, he explained. This litigation has resulted in "some tremendous victories," he said. "But there are some storm clouds on the horizon." He spoke, for example, of "the reincarnation of the intent standard" which would mean that voting rights attorneys would be forced to prove not only that a certain practice discriminates against minorities but that it intends to discriminate against them, an often difficult, if not impossible, thing to do.

Other speakers examined specific cases, strategies, policies and issues relating to the full achievement of minority voting rights. They included LANI GUINIER of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, FRANK PARKER of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, LAUGHLIN McDONALD of the American Civil Liberties Union, J. CLAY SMITH, a professor in the Howard School of Law and KENNETH TOLLETT, then-director of the university's Institute for the Study of Educational Policy.

**Michael G. Spencer**, assistant professor of electrical engineering, has received a Presidential Young Investigator Award from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

A specialist in semiconductor technology, he is one of 200 engineers and scientists in the nation to be selected to receive one of the prestigious awards. Awardees were chosen from a field of 1089 candidates submitted by 195 Ph.D.-granting institutions.

The awards, which fund research by faculty members near the begin-



ning of their careers, are intended to help universities attract and retain outstanding young Ph.D.s who might otherwise pursue non-teaching careers.

Each recipient will receive up to \$100,000 per year for five years in a combination of federal and matching private funds, i.e. the NSF will provide an annual base grant of \$25,000 and will provide up to \$37,500 per year in additional funds to match contributions from industry.



**Clive Callender**, director of Howard University Hospital's Transplant Center, has been appointed to a 21-member task force which will advise the Secretary of Health and Human Services on improving conditions for human organ transplantation.

The task force was set up in legislation signed by President Reagan last October. That legislation authorizes \$25 million in grants to organ procurement organizations over three years and calls for establishing a network to match donor organs to individuals.

Specifically, Callender and the other task force members will counsel Health and Human Services Secretary MARGARET M. HECKLER on the grant program and the organ network as well as on the important medical, legal, ethical, economic and social issues related to human organ transplantation.

**Lois Mailou Jones Pierre-Noel and Katherine Dunham** were two of the outstanding Black women featured in an exhibit entitled "Black Women: Their Achievements in the Face of Adversity" held at the Haitian-American Institute in Port-au-Prince during the month of February. The two women presided at the exhibit's opening in the Haitian capital on January 31.

The exhibit was co-sponsored by the Haitian-American Institute and the United States Information Service. It featured 20 posters created by the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service which made use of drawings, photographs, a narrative text and quotations to tell the story of the contributions Black women have made to American history, culture and society over a period of 120 years. Among the women featured were HARRIET TUBMAN, MADAME C. J. WALKER and, of course, Pierre-Noel and Dunham.

Pierre-Noel, a painter of renown, is professor emerita of art at Howard. Dunham, the distinguished anthropologist, dancer and choreographer, received an honorary degree from the university last May. Both women have strong ties to Haiti, have been influenced artistically by Haiti, and have played important roles in promoting Haitian culture in the United States.

**Love was the topic** of an emotionally charged evening when acclaimed writer MAYA ANGELOU spoke before a near-capacity audience in Cramton Auditorium on January 24.

Weaving her remarks with her own poetry and that of other Black writers (among them: PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR, ARNA BOMTEMPS, STERLING BROWN, NIKKI GIOVANNI, MARI EVANS and HAKI MADHUBUTI), she spoke of love in its many guises. But she placed special emphasis on the love that has given Black people the strength to endure through time.

She urged students, particularly, to explore the rich literature doc-

umenting that Black love. "Climb close to that literature," she declared. "Use it; it will tell you something. It will tell you how to stand erect."

Angelou's appearance was sponsored by the University-wide Cultural Committee which brings well-known artists to the campus. Other artists it has sponsored include MATTIWILDA DOBBS, JOE WILLIAMS, MELBA MOORE, and the late ALBERTA HUNTER.

**There has been "a constant, gradual upswing"** in the number of Black newspapers published in the nation, according to a five-year study undertaken by a Howard journalism professor.

Professor JAMES TINNEY, a former editor of the Washington Afro-American and assistant editor of the Kansas City Call, has identified more than 320 Black newspapers in the nation, double the estimate made by the industry. These papers have a combined circulation of more than six million and can be found in every state of the union, except North and South Dakota, Idaho and Wyoming. They include dailies, semiweeklies and weeklies, the latter the most prevalent type, and include newspapers with national reputations as well as those that can be found only in small mom-and-pop grocery stores within a local community.

Among the reasons Tinney suggests for the steady growth of the Black press: a greater demand for news told from a Black perspective; increased national advertising; more efficient management; and the growth of newspaper chains which enable a newspaper in one city to publish separate editions for other cities within the same state, for example.

As part of his ongoing study, Tinney is writing histories of some 200 of the more than 3,000 Black newspapers that have been published in the U.S. since 1827. □